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GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE TO BEGIN TESTING ELECTRONIC PASSPORTS
GPO Selects Four Contractors for Test Phase

Washington, D.C.-The United States Government Printing Office has awarded contracts to four companies to provide computer chips for testing a new electronic U.S. passport.

"The GPO designs and manufactures security and intelligence documents for the Federal government and takes the responsibility very seriously. The new technology that will eventually be incorporated into electronic U.S. passports will enhance the security of millions of Americans traveling around the world," said Bruce James, Public Printer of the United States and CEO of the GPO.

The three-phase project involves GPO, Department of State Bureau of Consular Affairs and The National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST). GPO will manufacture test passports using chip solutions provided by the four companies. NIST will then test the electronic passports for their ability to meet durability, security, and electronic requirements.

The four companies and the value of the contracts awarded for testing in the first phase of the project are:

Axalto, Inc.
2 awards of $107,770 each

BearingPoint/SuperCom, Inc.
$82,823

Infineon Technologies, North America
$108,317

SuperCom, Inc.
$73,787

Once testing results are completed and a final vendor(s) is selected, the Department of State plans to begin issuing electronic passports to U.S. Government employees in December. The first electronic passports are expected to be issued to the general public in the first quarter of 2005 with full deployment at all Department of State passport agencies in late 2005.

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